

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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To Those Concerned

DEAR BRETHREN:—The Brethren Publication Board has mailed bills to (1) those whose subscriptions expired during the year 1898 or at its close; (2) those who have unsettled ledger accounts; (3) all Sunday schools indebted to the office. It is earnestly hoped that all concerned will give the matter immediate attention. The month of July closes the business year of the Board, and it is very desirable that all old accounts should be settled before a new ledger is opened. Will you not aid us in clearing up all these old accounts and begin the new business year with a clean record? Any errors in your bill will be promptly corrected if notified.

How a Great Church Was Built

Francis Asbury, the founder and first Bishop of Methodism in America, tho a delicate man and often ill, traveled on horseback during his ministry of forty years a distance of over 250,000 miles, attended 224 conferences, ordained 4000 ministers, and preached 16,000 times. He crossed the Alleghanies sixty times along bear trails. American civilization at that time was confined to a narrow slip along the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida, with savages on the western and southern borders. There was no turnpike, no stage, seldom a bridge, few ferries. Rivers must be crossed by swimming. Roads were trails. He continued his arduous work until old age and disease had smitten him, and he was lifted from his horse in Spottsylvania Co., Va., to die. Catching the spirit of their leader the early Methodist itinerants braved every danger, endured every hardship, perils of the wilderness, perils of savages, hunger and cold, visiting the pioneer cabins, arrayed often in rags and patches, often suffering persecution. Asbury at a conference was so moved at the ragged appearance of his preachers that he records how he "parted with my watch, my coat, my shirt" to supply their need. One had worn out one sleeve of his coat but continued to preach, tho one arm had only a shirt sleeve. They denied themselves the comforts of home and remained unmarried because the slender resources of the church would not allow them to think of the expense of a family. When one married he was immediately retired from the itinerancy. Only death could put an end to their travels and labors. One of the most distinguished was found frozen to death on his way to an appointment. Instances among them of the utmost heroism, devotion, self denial and martyrdom can be multiplied indefinitely. Such was the beginning of Methodism in this country. A dozen of the same kind of men would achieve the same results now, but the men

cannot be found. It was said after the great naval battles of the late war that it was the men behind the gun who did the work. The men behind the guns of early Methodism were heroes of the primitive pattern. Their race has become extinct. According to one of their own church organs it has degenerated into "A Methodism of broad-cloth and kid gloves; a Methodism that forgets its mission to the poor; a Methodism that is anxious and troubled about the good places and the fat salaries."

A writer of another church complains that the church is kept from the people by broad-cloth. Earnest men everywhere are seeking to know why the glory has departed from the church, why the Holy Ghost power of its primitive youth is not apparent now in the midst of the world desolation. The answer seems to us to be plain enough. Revive a race of Asburys, Whitefields, Luthers, Pauls, and ten thousand pioneers of all the churches whose names, forgotten on earth but written in heaven, adorn the record of the Lord's army, and the church will again become "bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." But they will not come because we call. Grown numerous and powerful, and respectable according to the standard of the world, Methodism, and most of the other isms, are living upon the achievements of their noble pioneers. The organs of that church have but recently bewailed an actual loss of membership during the last conference year. Tens of thousands of churches, hundreds of colleges millions of endowment, an army of broad-cloth preachers, and a college of broad-cloth bishops, cannot show the net gain of a single soul for a whole year. A great cry of dismay has gone up from their ranks. "Oh for the days of Wesley, Whitefield and Asburys." But it would likely be a woful day for the kid glove gentry if Asbury, their apostolic first bishop, should come among them. He would not bear their spiritual pride, and their vain arrogance of numbers. He would not endure their worldly respectability, and their boasting of past achievements. He would tell them that the church which cannot point to living Asburys, should be ashamed to point to dead ones. Is there no lesson in this record for us to learn? May we not know how we may spread the borders of our Zion? Is there a man of God among us after the old pattern? Will heroes arise up from among our consecrated young men.